

Message Text

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SUBJ: MONTREAL REACTION TO AIR STRIKE SETTLEMENT

REF: MONTREAL 867 AND PREVIOUS

1. ALTHOUGH FEELINGS ABOUT THE AIR COMMUNICATIONS BILINGUALISM ISSUE SEEM TO HAVE DROPPED BELOW THE FLASH POINT OF A FEW DAYS AGO, THE MATTER REMAINS UNSETTLED AND UNFORGOTTEN, AT LEAST IN QUEBEC. THERE IS WIDE-SPREAD FEELING THAT THE POPULATION HAS ONCE AGAIN COME CLOSE TO THE EXPLOSION OF AGGRESSIVENESS AND HATRED WHICH SPRINGS UP AT THE LEAST INCIDENT OPPOSING ANGLOPHONES AND FRANCOPHONES. ALTHOUGH THE BILINGUALISM ISSUE HAS TAKEN SECOND BILLING IN THE PRESS TO THE TAIWAN PROBLEM AND OTHER OLYMPICS-RELATED MATTERS, IT IS STILL RECEIVING BROAD NEWS COVERAGE AND IS A FAVORITE TOPIC OF EDITORIAL WRITERS. HOWEVER, IT IS BEING TREATED IN A SOMEWHAT LESS EMOTIONAL MANNER, AND THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE MONTREAL PRESS MAY BE READY TO DO WHAT IT CAN TO HELP BRING ABOUT AN END TO THE CRISIS.

2. THE INQUIRY COMMISSION'S INTERPRETATION OF ITS MANDATE HAS BEEN GENERALLY WELL RECEIVED. MOST FRANCOPHONE DAILIES SEEM TO HAVE READ IT AS REMOVING THE BUILT-IN BIAS FROM THE LANG AGREEMENT WITH CALPA AND CATCA. IN ITS EDITORIAL JULY 7, LE DEVOIR CONSIDERS THAT ALTHOUGH THE STATEMENT BY THE COMMISSIONERS COULD HAVE BEEN STRONGER, IT INTERPRETED THE MANDATE IN A GENERALLY UNCLASSIFIED

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ACCEPTABLE MANNER. HOWEVER, THAT ALONE WILL NOT GUARANTEE THE

SUCCESS OF THE INQUIRY, LE DEVOIR ADDS. THE FRANCOPHONE CONTROLLERS MUST BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INQUIRY ON AN EQUAL FOOTING WITH CATCA AND, IN FACT, SINCE THEY ARE A NEW GROUP AND LESS WELL EQUIPPED THAN CATCA FINANCIALLY AND TECHNICALLY, THE COMMISSIONERS SHOULD GO OUT OF THEIR WAY TO FACILITATE THEIR PARTICIPATION.

3. LA PRESSE, IN ITS EDITORIAL OF JULY 8, STATES IT IS REASSURED BY THE COMMISSIONERS' STATEMENT. IT TAKES IT TO MEAN THAT THE THREE JUDGES OBVIOUSLY INTEND TO HEAR ALL POINTS OF VIEW AND SEEK ALL EXPORT ADVICE POSSIBLE. THE FRANCOPHONE CONTROLLERS WHO HAVE ENDED THEIR WORK-TO-RULE STRIKE SHOULD GO A STEP FURTHER AND COOPERATE WITH THE COMMISSION. HOWEVER, LA PRESSE ADDS, THE COMMISSION MUST REALIZE THAT THE FRANCOPHONE CONTROLLERS DO NOT HAVE THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF THEIR ANGLOPHONE COUNTERPARTS AND THE JUDGES MUST SEE TO IT THAT THEY ARE NOT DISADVANTAGED BY THIS. IN ANY CASE, LA PRESSE CONCLUDES, IT NOW LOOKS AS THOUGH THE COMMISSION WILL DEFINITELY HOLD ITS HEARINGS AND NOTHING IS TO BE GAINED BY BOYCOTTING THEM.

4. THE GAZETTE'S EDITORIAL OF JULY 10 SEES THE INTERPRETATION BY THE COMMISSIONERS AS A SETBACK FOR FEDERAL MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION LANG. THE GAZETTE SEES LANG AS ONCE AGAIN TRYING "TO BULL HIS WAY THROUGH CONTROVERSY" AND EMERGING FROM THIS "A MUCH DIMINISHED FIGURE." THE EDITORIAL RAISES DOUBTS ABOUT HIS CONTINUING ON WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

5. IN HIS EDITORIAL OF JUNE 10, CLAUDE RYAN OF LE DEVOIR SAYS THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT IS FACING A SERIOUS CONFIDENCE CRISIS AND IT ONLY REMAINS TO SEE HOW DEEPLY ROOTED IT IS. RYAN CONTINUES THAT THE COUNTRY IS NOT DIVIDED ON THE ISSUE OF BILINGUALISM BUT ON THE WAY THE GOVERNMENT HAS TRIED TO IMPLEMENT BILINGUALISM. ALTHOUGH SOME CANADIANS TEND TO BECOME DISCOURAGED BY THE CURRENT OPPOSITION TO BILINGUALISM, OTHERS, AND RYAN RANKS HIMSELF AMONG THESE, SEE A REAL SIGN OF HOPE IN THE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS WHICH HAS BEEN MADE IN THE LAST TEN YEARS.

6. PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU'S JULY 9 INTERVIEW OVER A MONTREAL FRANCOPHONE TV STATION IN WHICH HE DISCUSSED THE AGREEMENT WITH UNCLASSIFIED

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THE AIR CONTROLLERS AND PILOTS AS WELL AS THE PROBLEM OF BILINGUALISM WAS THE SUBJECT OF EDITORIALS IN LA PRESSE AND LE DEVOIR. BOTH DAILIES SAID THE PM DEFENDED THE LANG AGREEMENT AS EXPECTED. BOTH FELT THAT THE PM SUCCEEDED IN ESTABLISHING THAT IT WAS UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THAT A HUNDRED YEARS OF ENGLISH UNILINGUALISM WOULD BE REVERSED IN ONLY TEN YEARS. FOR LA PRESSE, THE PM DEFINITELY CAME OUT THE WINNER IN THE TV EXCHANGE. LE DEVOIR'S EDITORIAL OF JULY 12 LOOKS AT TRUDEAU'S BILINGUALISM

POLICY IN SOME DEPTH. LE DEVOIR DENIES THE PM'S ALLEGATIONS THAT QUEBEC'S LANGUAGE LEGISLATION THREATENS BILINGUALISM IN CANADA. CERTAIN POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL STATEMENTS BY QUEBEC PREMIER BOURASSA MIGHT POINT TO THAT CONCLUSION, BUT THE PEOPLE OF QUEBEC DO NOT NECESSARILY AGREE. TO CONCLUDE IN 1976 THAT A POLICY ANNOUNCED IN 1968 WILL NOT WORK IS UNREALISTIC. HOWEVER, CONCLUDES LE DEVOIR'S WRITER, THE AIR COMMUNICATIONS CRISIS HAS REVEALED STRONG RESISTANCE TO THE PREMIER'S BILINGUALISM POLICY. HE MUST COMPLETELY REVIEW THE POLICY AND HIS METHOD OF IMPLEMENTING IT. HE MUST ASK HIMSELF WHETHER THE CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS ARE REALISTIC IN THOSE AREAS OF CANADA WHERE THE NEED FOR FRENCH IS PRACTICALLY NIL AND WHERE ITS INTRODUCTION ONLY IRRITATES THE POPULATION. EFFORTS AT IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY SHOULD VARY ACCORDING TO REGIONS IF FURTHER CRISES ARE TO BE AVOIDED.
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